

Review of Ability of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses to Conduct Physical and Psychological Evaluations under the Occupations Code §301.4521 and Board Rules and Guidelines

Summary of Request: Consider the Advanced Practice Nursing Advisory Committee's (APNAC's) review of the ability of advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) to conduct physical and psychological evaluations under the *Occupations Code §301.4521* and Board rules and guidelines.

Historical Perspective: At the October 2010 Board meeting, the Board issued the following charge to the APNAC:

- Review the ability of an APRN to conduct physical and psychological evaluations under the Occupations Code §301.4521 and Board rules and guidelines;
- Determine whether any empirical data exists to support including APRNs in the Board's guidelines; and
- Recommend any amendments to the Board's rules or guidelines, as supportable and necessary.

The APNAC discussed this issue at three separate meetings in 2011 and 2012. The committee also sought input from the following resources:

- John Lehman, PhD, Clinical Psychologist–Lehman and Associates, Richardson, Texas
- Margaret Brackley, PhD, RN, FNP, CNS-PMH, FAAN, FAANP–University of Texas Health Science Center-San Antonio, Retired Professor and Director of Center for Violence Prevention, San Antonio, Texas
- Stella Logan, MSN, RN, PMHNP, CNS-PMH–Austin Travis County Integral Care and University of Texas at Austin, Instructor, Austin, Texas
- Diane Snow, PhD, RN, PMHNP, CNS-PMH, CARN, FAANP–University of Texas at Arlington, Clinical Professor and Co-Director of Center for Psychopharmacology Education and Research, Arlington, Texas

Deborah Antai-Otong, MSN, RN, PMHNP, CNS-PMH, FAAN, Consultant to the APNAC, also served to provide expertise in this area.

The APNAC unanimously agreed that APRNs who are approved to practice in the psychiatric/mental health population focus area should be permitted by the Guidelines for Physical and Psychological Evaluations to complete certain psychological evaluations (e.g., chemical dependency evaluation) to the extent that they have been educated to do so in collaboration with the delegating physician as appropriate. However, the Committee was unable to produce empirical data to support its conclusion. The Committee was able to identify one individual who would meet the Board's guidelines to perform psychological evaluations; however, this individual is dually licensed as an APRN and a clinical psychologist. Therefore, she would qualify to perform these examinations under the Board's guidelines pursuant to her clinical psychologist license, not her APRN authorization, education, or training. The Committee was unable to identify any APRN who could currently qualify under the Board's guidelines to perform these evaluations under his/her APRN authorization, education, or training alone.

Without evidence to support a change, Staff recommends that the Board make no change to its rule or guidelines at this time. Board rule currently permits an APRN to provide these services if s/he possesses the credentials, expertise and competency to do so. Therefore, should an APRN believe that s/he possesses the credentials to perform such an evaluation, s/he could request a review of his/her credentials for compliance

with those criteria already set forth in Board guidelines. Should evidence come forward in the future that supports a change to Board rule or guidelines, Staff could share this information with the Board at that time.

Pros and Cons:

Permitting APRNs to perform these evaluations would be beneficial to the Board in that APRNs understand the continuum of nursing practice. However, without evidence to support that APRNs have completed the appropriate education and training to provide such an evaluation, there is a risk that the evaluation would not provide the information necessary for the Board to utilize the evaluation to be able to render an appropriate determination regarding a nurse's ability to practice in a safe and competent manner.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to accept the report of the Advanced Practice Nursing Advisory Committee regarding the ability of advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) to conduct physical and psychological evaluations under the *Occupations Code §301.4521* and Board rules and guidelines. Further move to make no change to the Board's rules or Guidelines for Physical and Psychological Examinations at this time.